I have previously stated that my concerns about NMD revolve largely around four issues: The nature of the threat; the implications for arms control and the international security environment; the feasibility of the technology; and the cost. I would like to address each of these in turn.

The bottom line of these concerns is simply this: Will a unilateralist missile defense deployment decision become the basis for a new arms race, leading to a world with more ballistic missiles and WMD pointed at the United States, not less? Would the United States be more secure, or less?

We also must ask where does the long range missile threat to the U.S. stand?

Russia for all its problems, remains the only nation possessing enough Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles, ICBMs, and submarine launched ballistic missiles, SLBMs, to overwhelm the proposed U.S. defensive umbrella. China has only a small number of ICBMs. No other nation has operational ICBMs and only two, France and the United Kingdom, have SLBMs.

Other countries, such as North Korea, Iran, Iraq, do not today have ballistic missile capabilities that are a threat to the United States. We should not act in ways to encourage them to develop these capabilities or, just as troubling, to develop alternate means to attack the United States which NMD is powerless to counter.

Looking ahead, however, George Tenet, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, testified before Congress last year that ''over the next 15 years, our cities will face ballistic missile threats from a variety of actors.'' He pointed to North Korea which, he said, could further develop its Taepo Dong 2 missile, noting that it ''might be capable of delivering a nuclear payload to the United States.''

Other nations which have or are pursuing ballistic missile programs include Iran and Iraq. Neither of these countries have succeeded in developing ballistic missile capabilities, however, and unless they make a concerted effort to do so, neither appears likely to develop capabilities within the next 10 years.

As we consider U.S. missile defense policy, I believe it is a fair question to ask what sort of developments in the international security environment might lead them, or others, to make that sort of concerted effort?

As the past two weeks have too well illustrated, the world is not a static place. International security relationships are fluid and dynamic. The United States today is the world's sole superpower, and although that gives us great strategic flexibility and maneuverability, it would be naive for us to believe that other nations and transnational groups do not and will not react to the strategic choices the United States makes, and how they perceive those choices affecting their own interests.

In other words, how might the rest of the world react to a unilateral U.S. decision to deploy NMD? What would other countries do to protect what they perceive as their national security interests in the face of a U.S. NMD?

The National Intelligence Estimate prepared last year, ''Foreign Responses to U.S. National Missile Deployment,'' suggests that in reaction to U.S. NMD deployment:

Russia could opt to deploy shorter-range missiles along its borders and resume adding multiple warheads to its ballistic missiles.

China would most likely seek to deploy additional missiles with MIRVed warheads if the U.S. went ahead with NMD. This would mean that China may attempt a strategy of ''breaking out,'' giving them the capability to ''overwhelm'' a U.S. NMD system.

North Korea could resume its missile flight test program and cooperate with other countries, such as Iran or Iraq, in helping them develop missile capabilities.

Iran and Iraq might well redouble their efforts to develop their own missile programs, including decoys and countermeasures that would allow them to bypass a U.S. missile shield.

The NIE report also concluded that if China sought to deploy additional missiles and warheads in response to NMD, this might prompt India to respond by building up its own nuclear arsenals and missile arsenal, which would in turn prompt Pakistan to seek to develop additional nuclear weapons and advanced missiles, unleashing a South Asian nuclear arms race.

I do not believe I need to comment further, given recent events, just how dangerous that would be.

Such a destabilized environment, with Russia, China, North Korea, India, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, and possibly others adding to their nuclear arsenals or missile capabilities does not strike me as a more stable world, or one in which the U.S. is more secure from the threat of WMD or missile attack.

In addition, many analysts believe that if the United States were to go ahead with NMD, rogue states and terrorists groups would simply shift their focus from developing missile technology to delivering weapons of mass destruction by ship, plane, or cruise missile, methods that are both more reliable, provide no ''return address,'' and can't be countered by NMD.

I do not even want to contemplate what September 11 would have been like had one or more of those hijacked planes contained even a small, primitive, ''dirty'' nuclear device.

The second issue I would like to address today is the implication of a rush to deploy NMD for the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

Today the ABM Treaty is the keystone of a number of interlinked nuclear arms control agreements, including the START I and START II treaties with Russia. Although the ABM Treaty may require some modifications to take into account the realities of the new security environment, and this legislation urges the Administration to pursue such negotiations, to just cast it aside risks undermining the very foundations of strategic stability and U.S. national security.

The United States has long been at the forefront of the international community in trying to inculcate respect for international law and treaty obligations.

In fact, one of the ways in which the United States identifies so-called rogue states is that these are states that do not respect their obligations to other members of the international community; states who walk away from, ignore, or cheat on their treaty obligations.

And so it is deeply troubling to me that the United States may now be telling the rest of the world, through its own actions, that it is accepted behavior to break your treaty obligations.

Indeed, with this approach I am particularly concerned that the United States may, in fact, be sending precisely the wrong message on international arms control to China: That only the weak must respect other nations and international law. If you are strong enough, you can do as you please.

If the United States seeks to unilaterally abrogate the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, and in general treat international treaty commitments as mere pieces of paper to be disregarded if they prove inconvenient, how can we expect to hold China accountable to live up to its international agreements, or to the commitment it has made to the Missile Technology Control Regime?

As reported in the press accounts earlier this summer, the Department of Defense ABM Compliance Review Group, the Pentagon lawyers tasked to identify potential ABM Treaty issues raised by the testing schedule, have determined that some elements of the administration's plan for developing missile defenses may conflict with the ABM Treaty by 2002.

Indeed, a July 30, 2001 letter from Undersecretary Paul Wolfowitz to me stated that the ''Department has neither designed the missile defense program to intentionally impact the ABM treaty sooner rather than later, nor have we designed it to avoid the treaty.'' That is good as far as it goes. But is also avoids the real question:

Has the Department of Defense made an effort to develop a missile defense testing program which is, by intent, consistent with the ABM? So long as the treaty is in force and is the supreme law of the land that seems to me to be a reasonable requirement.

Moreover, as Philip Coyle, the former director of Operational Test and Evaluation at the Pentagon, wrote in a recent issue of The Defense Monitor, the ABM treaty ''is not holding back the design and development of the technology needed for National Missile Defense, NMD, nor is the treaty slowing the tests of an NMD system. Development of NMD will take a decade or